

MEMPHIS 2000

POLICY PLAN

Memphis City Council Adoption

September, 1981

Shelby County Board of Commissioners Adoption

October, 1981

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NIGHT CITY REFLECTION



I N T R O D U C T I O N

Photograph on previous page - The Memphis skyline at night as viewed from the Mississippi River.

INTRODUCTION

The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan is a guide for the physical, economic and social development of Memphis and Shelby County through the year 2000. The policies within the Policy Plan provide a framework by which individuals and public officials can make decisions that are consistent with the community's development objectives. Preparation of the Memphis 2000 Policy Plan was the primary responsibility of the Office of Planning and Development (OPD), with necessary assistance from other public agencies of Memphis and Shelby County. Participation by citizens and private groups also provided fundamental assistance in formulating the Plan.

The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan resulted from a five phase planning process. Phase I was a basic inventory of data presented in five background reports: Population, Economy, Housing, Land Use and Public Facilities. The five reports presented facts and projections for the year 2000 for use by citizens and public officials in identifying current urban problems and opportunities for the future.

Phase II in the planning process consisted of identifying community-wide issues, conflicts, goals and objectives. This phase was completed by the Office of Planning and Development staff, assisted by Advisory Committees. These Committees included persons experienced in a wide variety of areas covered by the Plan. Representatives of the City Council and the Board of Commissioners were also asked to serve on the Committees.

In Phase III, the Advisory Committees and the Office of Planning and Development staff prepared the Policy Plan with recommendations for economy, land use, housing, transportation and public facilities. The Plan recommends policy changes to address problems and suggests specific strategies to alter and improve conditions. The Policy Plan is designed to aid and guide local government and the general public in the next five to ten years toward goals to be reached by the year 2000.

Phase IV of the planning process was the preparation of the Plan Map to graphically illustrate the implementation of these policies. The map designates mixed-use Urban and Regional Centers; Industrial Districts; Transitways, which are the major transportation corridors; and the limit to which urban growth may expand by the year 2000.

The final phase of the Memphis 2000 Policy Plan process is the continuous review and update of the Plan which will allow for flexibility and adjustments to meet future requirements. An annual review of the Plan will be prepared to include the progress of plan implementation, recommendations for changes in plan policies and prioritized strategies in a schedule of activities for the next year. At least once every five years a review of the Plan in its entirety will be completed. This process will include updating the data base and reviewing the Policy Plan for necessary revision.

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE MEMPHIS 2000 POLICY PLAN

The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan has been prepared by the Office of Planning and Development in conjunction with four Advisory Committees. Public hearings on the Policy Plan were held by both the Office of Planning and Development and the local legislative bodies. This was to ensure that the public would be given ample opportunity to make comments and suggestions regarding the Plan. After holding public hearings, the Memphis City Council and the Shelby County Board of Commissioners adopted the Memphis 2000 Policy Plan by resolution.

The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan is a statement of the local government policies covering the physical, social and economic development of the community. It is a working document and to maintain its viability, the Office of Planning and Development periodically will recommend amendments to ensure the Plan's consistency with actual working policies. The Board of Commissioners and City Council will vote to adopt or reject amendments proposed by the Office of Planning and Development in the annual review and five year update processes.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation phase of the process is the most important and most difficult. The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan recommends a significant number of changes in existing procedures as well as setting forth policies and actions in areas previously not addressed. There are a number of implementing methods or techniques available to local government agencies and the community to carry out these changes.

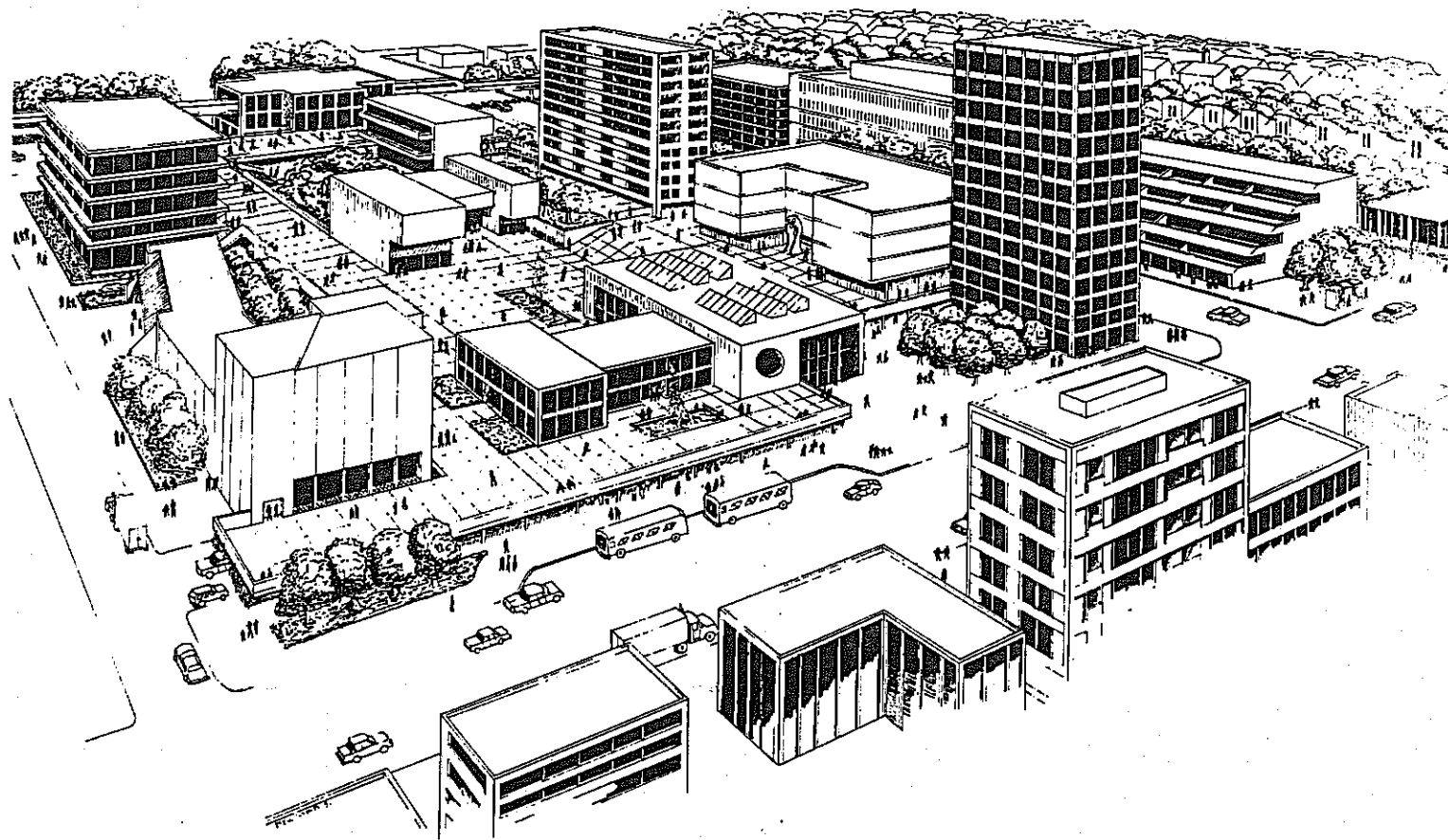
Capital Improvement Programs (C.I.P.) for both Memphis and Shelby County are five-year schedules of publicly financed physical improvements. These schedules, which should strongly reflect the direction the community has chosen, are based on the choice of selected projects (roads, bridges, sewers), and on an analysis of fiscal resources available. A coordinated set of policies to guide the extension and improvement of public facilities and services can significantly impact a community in terms of public costs, the quality and extent of services, and growth patterns. Emphasis here will be placed on receiving the maximum public benefit from the expenditures for public facilities such as water, sewers and roads.

Land use controls, including zoning and subdivision regulations, are where the interplay between the public interest and private development interests is greatest. These regulatory powers allow or encourage desirable forms of development and discourage or prohibit undesirable forms. Desirability will be expressed in the form of adopted public policies.

In addition to regulatory measures, a well-coordinated set of incentives can act as encouragement to those types and patterns of development outlined in the Policy Plan. Various tax and development density incentives can be inducements for private sector actions to be more consistent with the public interest. Economic development incentives can also change the present economic structure into a more highly developed state.

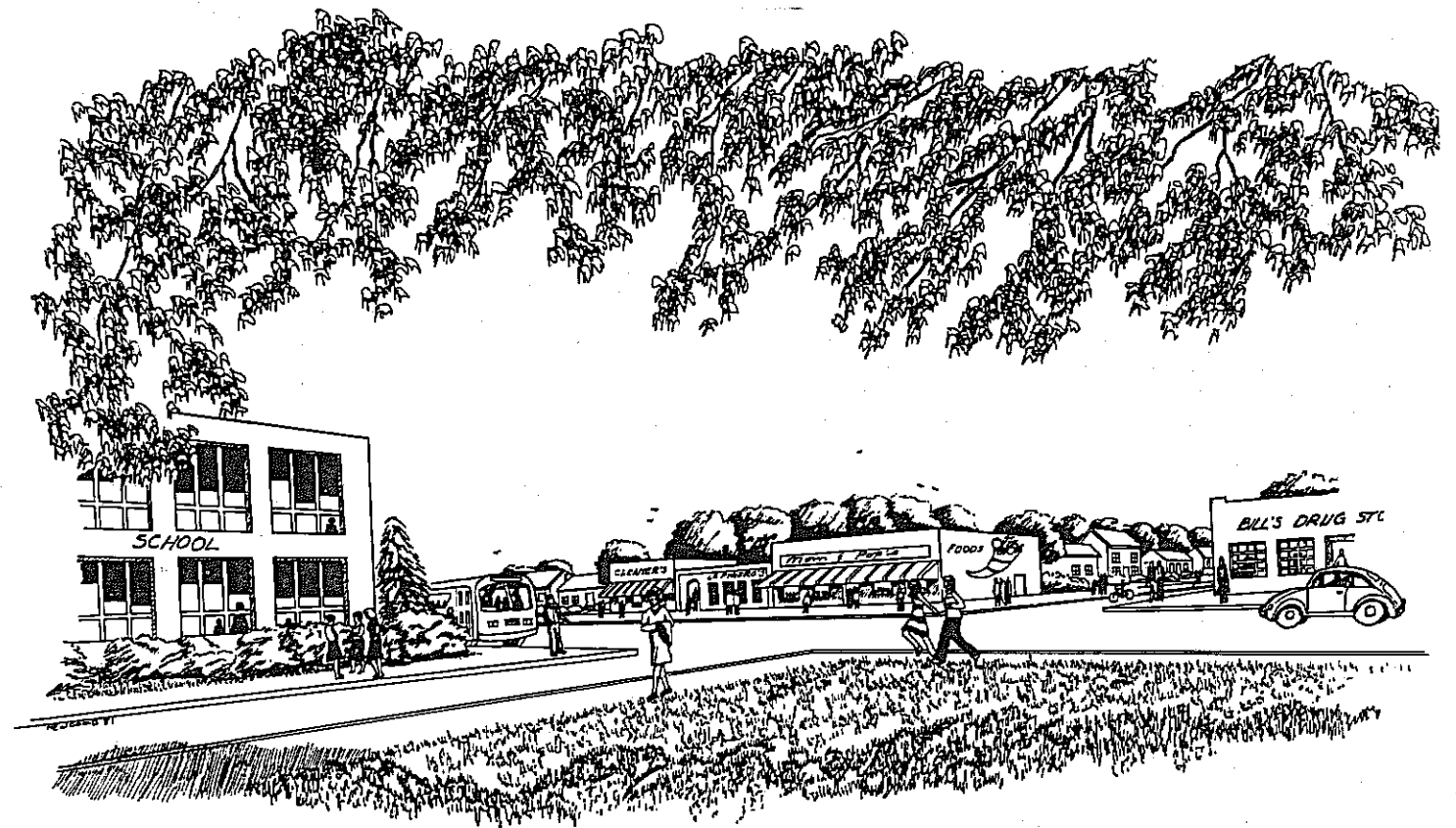
A series of District Plans will be initiated to analyze and guide physical development in the twenty planning areas following the recommendations of the Policy Plan. These studies will provide sufficient detail to be used in the daily administration of the development process.

By implementing the Memphis 2000 Policy Plan, Memphis and Shelby County can provide an environment that is more attractive for residents, business and industry. Residents can be assured that the livability of their neighborhood is of utmost importance to local government; that they will receive adequate facilities and services; and that shopping, cultural, entertainment and recreation activities are convenient. Investors and businesses interested in locating or expanding in the community can identify established official policies upon which to base their plans. The intent of the policies is to provide benefits for both public and private interests.



URBAN CENTERS

Centralized locations for providing a variety of services in close proximity to the service population. Each center will contain a mixture of high density residential, commercial, office and governmental uses.



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Conveniently located centers that serve the primary consumer needs of residential areas.

The Plan is also an important official document in as much as municipal bond rating companies often examine a city's long range plans as well as the specific projects to be financed by bonds. These companies find that the examination of such a plan gives evidence of the community's solvency and the effectiveness of its management. Implementing the Memphis 2000 Policy Plan can only enhance the future opportunities for growth and development of the community.

PLAN SUMMARY

The Plan is divided into five sections: Economy, Land Use, Housing, Transportation and Public Facilities. Each section is organized by major issues and goals. The Goals are divided into specific Policies that can be more readily accomplished. Strategies follow each Policy and indicate actions which would implement the Policy and ultimately achieve the Goal.

A summary of each section and an explanation of the benefits to be gained by the community follows:

ECONOMY

The Memphis 2000 Plan recommends creating more jobs and diversifying the economic base of the community in order to increase productivity and wages. The labor force skill level, type of job, and level of wages are directly related. As local skills increase, businesses and jobs are formed to employ such skills, also increasing the wage level. To improve labor force skills, the Plan advises the creation of new training programs and the improvement of the public education system. Revising the state and local tax structure will also contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to new industry, the expansion of existing industry, and increased job opportunities. Specifically, taxes which are not incentives to raising the level of capital expenditures should be phased out and regressive taxes should be replaced with progressive taxes. In addition, the introduction and incorporation of a variety of energy sources would reduce our dependency on any single energy source. As a final step toward diversifying the local economy, a program should be developed and widely marketed to ensure that businesses are aware of the advantages of locating in the Memphis area.

LAND USE

The Plan recommends that a more contiguous land use pattern develop during the next twenty years, resulting in a more efficient and cost effective use of public services and facilities. To meet this goal, the Plan recommends that urban uses be encouraged within the Urban Service Boundary. This policy is based on the high cost of providing municipal services to the area outside the Boundary and the availability of more than sufficient land within the Boundary to serve the projected population for the year 2000.

Policies relating to the natural environment include development in the floodplain; practices which aggravate soil erosion, sedimentation, or increase runoff; and practices which expose people to harmful substances. In addition, the Plan advises that there be no significant construction in any of the identified floodways, in accordance with the current zoning ordinance.

The Plan recommends increasing land use densities which would decrease the per capita consumption of energy as well as make mass transit more self-supporting. The Plan identifies eight major roads as the primary mass transit routes in the developed area and these routes are designated as Transitways on the Plan Map. Higher density residential uses and planned mixed uses will be encouraged to locate along the Transitways. The surrounding areas with predominantly low density residential uses will be connected by feeder routes to one or more of the Transitways.

Non-residential uses sometimes encroach into neighborhoods, adversely affecting the residential quality of the area. However, because residential and commercial uses are mutually supportive, they should be located in appropriate proximity based on service area. Special incentives and assistance are proposed to encourage higher density mixed use developments to improve strip commercial areas. In many cases, the existing site design or structure makes the site unattractive for new commercial, office, and residential use. The redevelopment of these areas can produce the higher densities needed to support the Transitway concept, as well as provide additional destinations for transit riders. The larger scale developments will reduce the number of curb cuts and by using the Planned Development Regulations, adjacent and nearby residential uses can be accommodated. District Plans will be prepared to encourage internal traffic flow and improved streetscape and intersection design.

The Plan recommends the placement of future commercial uses in designated Centers according to the size of the service area. Five distinct Centers are proposed: Urban, Regional, Community, Neighborhood and Convenience Centers. The Urban and Regional Centers will contain those commercial uses which have a regional service area. In addition, high density commercial, office, governmental and residential uses will be integrated in Urban Centers to provide opportunities for living, working and shopping in one area. The Urban Centers are located at the intersection of a Transitway and a major road. The Plan suggests methods of encouraging developments within the Centers to incorporate park-and-ride lots, bus terminals and bus shelters in the site design. The Community, Neighborhood and Convenience Centers are to be designated in District Plans.

Institutions, such as universities and hospitals will be located within appropriate districts and expansion will occur only where it is compatible with the surrounding areas. Special studies will be conducted to identify suitable expansion areas for institutions.

Industrial uses have particular transportation requirements and also are frequently perceived as being the most difficult to locate in a manner compatible with other uses. The Plan recommends that a study be prepared to identify appropriate industrial areas for future development.

The Plan also recommends the maintenance and restoration of architecturally and historically significant structures and for the further development of the downtown area. Overall, the Plan suggests policies which will protect existing desirable features and improve the quality of future development in a cost-effective manner.

HOUSING

The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan encourages the improvement of neighborhood conditions, the rehabilitation of older homes, and the use of various approaches which should lessen the increasing cost of housing. It also recommends the elimination of discriminatory practices and the provision of adequate and accessible housing for the elderly, handicapped, and low income persons. Such actions will require cooperation between the public and private sectors involved in meeting the housing needs of Shelby County. An improved data collection system is recommended to strengthen the base of information upon which decisions will be made.

To make housing more affordable, techniques such as the zero-lot-line, higher density zoning, performance standards, modular housing and improved financing are recommended. In addition, the streamlining of government regulations affecting housing is proposed and public participation in matters affecting the quality of life in neighborhoods will be encouraged.

A variety of approaches including code revisions, incentives, and education are proposed to lessen residential energy consumption.

Infill of suitable vacant areas within Shelby County will also be encouraged to reduce energy-intensive suburban sprawl and take advantage of the existing urban infrastructure.

TRANSPORTATION

The ultimate goal of transportation is to create and maintain a safe, convenient and affordable transportation system. However, a proper balance must be maintained between the issue of community well-being and other potentially conflicting issues. These would include the social, economic, and environmental impact of transportation facilities and the necessity for increasing the energy efficiency of the entire system. The goals have to be met within the context of increased demands on limited transportation funding sources.

The interrelationship among land uses, densities, and transportation is a significant feature of the Plan. Increased residential densities are to be encouraged along selected Transitways to make a convenient, economical and fuel efficient form of mass transit feasible. A mass transit system which serves the major employment and commercial centers may become an increasingly viable alternative to the automobile, relieving peak hour traffic congestion. An improved road classification system based on degree of access is proposed to lessen the conflicts between land use and traffic flow.

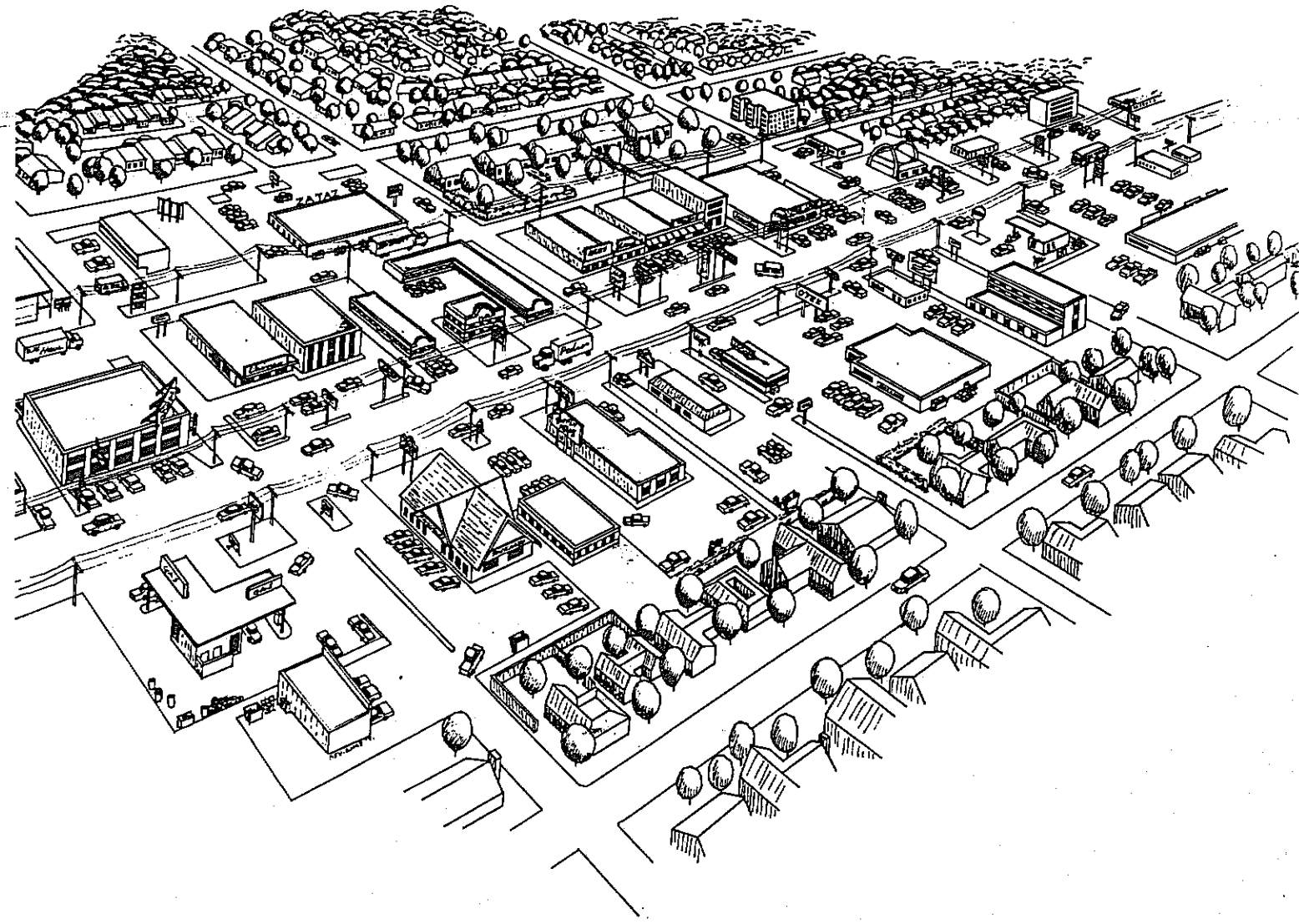
PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Memphis 2000 Policy Plan recommends that public facilities and services be provided in a coordinated, cost-efficient manner to adequately serve the local population. To ensure the orderly and efficient provision of facilities, actions by facility-providing agencies will be coordinated through the Capital Improvement Program.

An Urban Service Boundary is delineated following the planned Memphis sewer service area where urban level facilities and services will be concentrated. By concentrating services within this area, the population can be served adequately at a lower cost, compared to continued sprawl. The area within the Boundary contains more than enough land to meet the projected growth needs to the year 2000. The Plan recommends that no sewer lift stations be constructed with public funds for development in areas outside the Boundary. Such development often requires the unplanned extension of sewer interceptors and other expensive services. The area outside the Boundary should remain rural in character and in services.

To insure more adequate services, the Plan suggests continuous monitoring of service levels to identify those areas with deficient facilities. Priorities for improvements will be based on the impact of such deficiencies.

NOTE: For the sake of brevity, the Policy Plan includes abbreviations for agencies and does not define any terms in the text. A list of abbreviations can be found in Appendix A. Definitions of many terms used in the Plan are found in Appendix B.



STRIP COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Incremental and uncoordinated commercial development along a major road which is inefficient and detrimental to the flow of traffic.



MIXED USE DISTRICT/TRANSITWAY

Coordinated high density residential, office and commercial uses that will replace inefficient and unsightly strip development. Higher densities will be increasingly supportive of mass transit systems.